



April 4, 2010

The Honorable Jim Jordan  
United States House of Representatives  
1524 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Jordan,

On behalf of the 362,000 members of the National Taxpayers Union (NTU), I write in support of your bill, H.R. 1167, the Welfare Reform Act of 2011. Your legislation represents the next long-overdue step in restructuring anti-poverty programs: placing beneficiaries on a path toward independence from government assistance while savings taxpayers billions of dollars.

Congressional Republicans and President Clinton began the process of reforming welfare in the mid-1990s by requiring beneficiaries of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program to work or train for employment. Although the reforms succeeded in moving more than 8 million individuals off the welfare rolls and into jobs, it is just one of 77 federal programs providing means-tested benefits to low-income Americans. In fact, government spending on welfare has doubled since 1996 and is expected to total \$10.3 trillion over the next decade.

With a focus on building self-reliance rather than bigger deficits, your legislation expands upon the successes of the mid-1990s reforms to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, better known as the Food Stamp program. Requiring work, education, or job training as a prerequisite for Food Stamp benefits ensures that families develop the skills necessary to break the self-defeating cycle of government dependence.

Most importantly, your legislation takes steps to increase accountability in our government while curbing out of control costs. Even prior to the recession, welfare spending was 13 times greater, after adjusting for inflation, than it was when President Lyndon Johnson declared a war on poverty in 1964. Yet, poverty rates remain relatively unchanged. Taxpayers, many of whom are facing their own financial struggles, deserve a clear picture of how their money is being spent on welfare programs. By demanding a full accounting and disclosure of welfare spending we can begin to shed light on why so many tax dollars have produced so few results. Furthermore, by capping welfare spending at 2007 levels once unemployment falls below 6.5 percent, your bill would protect taxpayers from politically opportunistic attempts to unnecessarily ramp up program spending.

Given our unsustainable \$14.2 trillion debt, getting control of welfare spending is a necessity. Your bill allows us to accomplish that goal, but does so with a focus on promoting self-reliance rather than government dependence. For that reason, NTU applauds your introduction of the Welfare Reform Act and we hope to work closely with you toward its passage.

Sincerely,

Brandon Greife  
Federal Government Affairs Manager